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Pulpit Preaching

VOL. XII No.7 JULY, 1960

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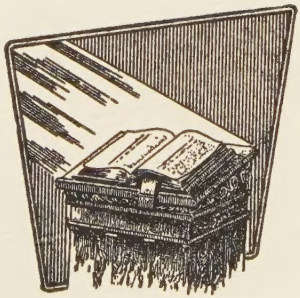

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PASTORAL PRAYER

Lowell M. Atkinson

Almighty and everliving God, we thank Thee for this day of sacred rest, for its hallowed memories, its joyous hopes. We thank Thee for the sacred associations reminding us of the touch of Thy spirit upon our lives, for Thy leading into light, for the power of Thy hand upholding us when we falter, for Thy wonderful presence giving to life meaning and glory and power when we are weak. And we thank Thee for the glorious vistas that lie before us when we walk the royal road of faith, for the joy of a great companionship where all that is wholesome and good and true is given fresh vigor and vitality in our experience, and for the sense of a mighty purpose that gives to all of life a sureness of direction even as we travel along the highways of Christian adventure.

We thank Thee, our Heavenly Father, that even this moment and this day Thou art present with us. Wilt Thou hear our prayers. Wilt Thou bless the unspoken prayers of our hearts. Wilt Thou sanctify the purposes that we entertain in our heart of hearts. Wilt Thou cleanse us from all that is wrong, and strengthen in us all that is fine. Because of the privilege of meeting with Thee here in conscious fellowship and prayer and worship, may we find ourselves better citizens of Thy holy kingdom and better servants of our Saviour Jesus Christ.

Now we ask that our prayers be

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BOOKS FOR PULPIT PREACHING

Religion That Is Eternal by G. Ray Jordan is a sensitive and sensible study, written in clear and expressive prose, of the faith needed by this age of space explorations, intercontinental missiles, and hydrogen bombs. "It is my purpose," the author writes, to show how we can experience religion that we will never outgrow and thus how we can accept the gifts of God, receive his benefits, and learn the practical meaning of his presence and power." The author taps the resources of biblical faith and daily life to illumine his pertinent theses. (Macmillan, 134 pp., $3)

Reach for the Sky (subtitled, "Life at Its Highest") by Robert E. Goodrich, Jr., contains ten substantial and invigorating sermons written with homiletic versatility and containing ideas and illustrations whcih will enliven many other sermons. Representative titles: "The Sound of a Different Drummer," "When It Is Hard to Believe," "Why So Many Marriages Succeed" and "How to Worry Like a Christian." (Revell, 126 pp., $2.50)

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Next month's themes will be "A Faith to Undergird Life" and "The Life-Giving Word of God." The emphases for the September issue will be "Emboldened by His Name" and "Communion Meditations."

Pulpit Preaching

Editors
CHARLES L. WALLIS
Keuka College Church
Keuka Park, N. Y.
CHARLES L. ALLEN
Grace Methodist Church
Atlanta, Georgia
E. PAUL HOVEY
The Federated Church
Lewiston, Idaho

Address sermon manuscripts and editorial correspondence to Rev. C. L. Wallis, Keuka College, Keuka Park, New York. Receipt will be acknowledged.

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JOHN W. MEISTER
PHILLIPS PACKER ELLIOTT
HOMER J. R. ELFORD
ARTHUR H. KOLSTI
WILLIAM GODDARD SHERMAN

EVERY CHRISTIAN AN EVANGELIST

EVANGELISM IN A NEW DIMENSION

John W. Meister, First Presbyterian Church, Fort Wayne, Indiana

To this we are witnesses. . . . And the faith which is through Jesus has given the man this perfect health. Acts 3:15-16.

The church of the first century has a way of putting to shame the church in any succeeding century. The Book of Acts, which is the history of the first century church, chronicles many incidents when the activity of the church caused the man in the street to be "astounded," or caused the Christians to be called "these who are turning the world upside down," or caused the leaders of the Christian movement to be carried off to jail. One of the best descriptions of the early Christians is that of T. R. Glover: "They were absurdly happy and always getting into trouble."

By contrast with the first century church, the Christian movement in our day—and particularly in our country—often seems as pallid and insipid as the white of an egg. So far from "astounding" people, Christians today are most likely to be those who do precisely "what is expected." So far from being those who try to turn the world upside down, Christians today are most likely to be those who seek to keep things on an even keel, without disturbing anyone or causing any division of opinion. And so far from being those who are sent off to jail for challenging the civil authorities, Christians today consider queer a man of their own fellowship who prefers prison to a compromise with conscience. As a result, it can scarcely be said of us as a community that we are the ones who are absurdly happy and always getting into trouble. Each one of us has his own share of trouble, but usually he does not "get into it" by going about doing good. And we are much more likely to be "at peace" than "absurdly happy."

Strange as it may seem, therefore, it is generally true that when the c h u r c h seeks seriously to be the church it must recognize itself as being located under the judgment of the first century or Apostolic Church. While we have surpassed the Apostolic fellowship in many ways – in prestige and affluence, in buildings and organizations, in numbers and pretensions, to name only some of the ways—we have not surpassed the early Christians in the thing that ultimately matters: the quality of their witness.

From the very beginning of God's redemptive activity, when he chose Abraham and his successors to be a light to the nations, until this very moment, God's people are first and foremost his witnesses. The church's first assignment is to bear testimony to what God has done and is doing to change men and world until they conform to his pattern for them. And as regards the quality of this witness, the Apostolic Church has never been surpassed.

Our present day church is strangely handicapped in its witnessing by certain cultural situations which are peculiar to our day. For example, in an exceptionable if not unique way religion is generally considered "a

good thing." Put bluntly, religion-in-general has never been so popular and religionists have never had it so good. This situation presents some obvious blessings and is in many apparent ways conducive to witnessing. At least, Christians are not persecuted for their efforts at evangelism. In more subtle but equally real ways, however, this situation is a handicap to Christian witnessing. In a day when every religion is considered good it is, paradoxically, difficult to proclaim the particularities of the Christian religion. The climate of opinion seems to hold that a vague feeling of religiousity is enough and that an attempt to show that "the name of Jesus is the only name given among men by which they may be saved" comes as an affront to good sportsmanship and as an offense to the tolerant spirit.

Another handicap to witnessing for Christ may be found in the plethora of government agencies, service clubs, and fraternal organizations which minister to the bodily and mental needs of people. Virtually all of these efforts received their original incentive from Christ and his church, but most of them are by now virtually divorced from any recognizable relationship to the Christian movement. At the same time, a good case could be built to argue that for the most part these groups which operate outside the church are more effective in t h e i r ministrations than are the c h u r c h e s in these same areas of activity. For example, a hospital can cure more people who are physically sick than can a local church. We do not wonder, then, that a host of people fail to see the necessity for the church as an institution and fail to hear a vital relationship between the church's message and the world's need.

II

Against this kind of cultural background, how is the church to witness to the power of Christ today?

First and forever central, the local church will bear faithful witness by the public worship of God. All too often someone raises the question, "But why is attendance at public worship necessary to the Christian life? Is it not possible to live a Christian life and say your prayers in privacy?" Of course, one may and ought to live a private life with God, but this life will not be one of obedience to Christ until it includes worshipping in public. Did he not say, "Let your light shine before men . . . He who confesses me before men I will confess before my Father . . . He who is not for me is against me." When we Christians speak about "the public worship of God" we do not refer to "the public" worshipping God but to Christians worshipping God in public. This is our primary way of witnessing, of standing up, and of being counted for Christ and his kingdom.

Strangely enough, this principle is more e a s i l y seen in lands where Christianity is not the dominant faith. In Russia and China today, for example, very logical tyrants cannot tolerate the public worship of God. If they were to do so, they would be admitting that the Christians who thus worshipped would be putting loyalty to God ahead of loyalty to the state—and this no dictator can permit. As long as Christians worship publicly they are thereby testifying that no government and no human being possesses ultimate power and that the way to life is the way of direct relationship between the believer and God.

The first and foremost way you and I can witness to our faith in God as Jesus revealed him is to worship God publicly in the midst of friend and foe.

There is a second way of bearing witness which is like the first in importance: the Christian community must do deeds which manifest concern for the needs of all people. We have it on good authority that if those around us can see our good

works they will give God the glory. This is witnessing in its finest hour.

The temptation in this regard for the typical local church is to be content with speaking boldly on social issues when the smoke of battle is past—or in another part of the world—and when courage costs nothing. Karl Barth recently reminded us, it is cheap valor for the church in America to condemn Communism because Russian Communism is not a live option for Americans today. That kind of witness does not stir the souls of men. It is quite another thing for the Christian community in Communist-controlled Czechoslovakia to speak out for Christ and his truth.

In contrast, the vital church must be concerned with the present needs of all people, particularly the people near at hand. The Christian community must make a continuing and faithful witness by deeds which reflect an honest concern for young people, for young families trying for a decent start in life, for alcoholics who cannot handle the drink problem, for persons who cannot manage their emotional and mental conflicts, for groups who are virtually forced to live in inadequate housing, for employable persons who cannot find job opportunities. At the same time we must join hands with the Christian community across our nation to find adequate answers to such problems as re-adjusting persons displaced by automation in industry and eliminating vicious practices of racial discrimination. And at the same time still, we must join hands with the Christian community across the world to clothe and feed and shelter the refugees and war orphans and underprivileged of all lands. Only as we do such deeds can the people outside the church see that we "do works worthy of repentance"—our repentance and theirs. And only so can we hope to win their respect for our faith and their loyalty to our God.

The pattern for our procedure may be seen in the New Testament passage in which Peter and John were going up to the temple—the place to worship publicly—when a beggar at the gate asked for a gift. These two Christians were too perceptive to suppose that what this man really needed was money. His need lay much deeper. He needed a reason to live. So Peter said, "I have no silver and gold, but I give you what I have: in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk." And taking him by the right hand, he raised the beggar to his feet.

When the people saw this they were "astounded." Then Peter bore his public witness. Telling of the work of God in Christ he confronted his hearers with this stinging charge, "You have killed the Author of life. . . . Of this we are witnesses. (But) the faith which is through Jesus has given the man this perfect health."

When we combine public worship with public deeds which bring health, then the world will take note that we have been with Jesus and join his company. There are no short cuts.

WHOM SHALL I SEND?

Phillips Packer Elliott, First Presbyterian Church, Brooklyn, New York

Sometimes men hear God's call in the open country, as did Amos as he followed his herds in Tekoa. But it was in the beauty and mystery of the temple that Isaiah heard God's call. First there came the cleansing of the worshipper, the touching of his lips with the coal from the altar. Then there came the question, "Whom shall I send and who will go for us?" and Isaiah's answer, "Here am I, send me."

It is a great thing to be sent on a mission. It gives meaning to life. We think we want to avoid responsibility, but in reality nothing makes us

happier than to have a task to perform, a mission to accomplish. Nothing is more deadly than the feeling that there is nothing that we must do, no task pressing upon us, no errand on which we are being sent.

Maturity means accepting a mission. This is happening in the field of foreign missions itself. We used to talk of "'sending" and "receiving" countries. When a country ceases to be a "receiving" land and begins to "send" missionaries, it has come into the fullness of Christian experience. Missionaries are now being sent, for example, from the Philippines to Thailand, and back and forth across the Asiatic world. The child continues to receive; the man is sent in order to give.

Jesus stressed this among His disciples. He first called them to Him, saying, "Come with Me," "Follow Me," "Come unto Me and I will give you rest." But this was the first stage and, necessary as it was, it was not the more important. That came when the relationship changed, and instead of coming to Him, the disciples must leave Him. In the tenth chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel, after the names of the disciples are all given, it is said, "These twelve Jesus sent forth." He wanted them near Him. but not permanently. It was more important for them to leave Him, to be engaged in His task. His final commission to them was "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." It was when they were sent out upon His mission, which had become theirs, that they learned the full meaning of the Christian life.

I

Let us, then, think of this question, asked in the dimness of the temple, as a young man knelt there before God. "Whom shall I send and who will go for us?" Let us think, in the first place, of God's constant search for men. He has a great undertaking on hand, and He needs men to help Him carry it out. We live in a day of vast enterprises, of companies and movements which have relationships all over the world. The magnitude of many of our modern industries defies comprehension. How can they hold together? How can they be managed? Men must be found who will adequately staff them and lead them.

So the search for men goes on all the while. Representatives visit college campuses to talk with graduates, hoping to find someone who can be "sent" into one of the promising but difficult portions of the task. It is hard to find those who qualify. The call continues to sound in modern life, "Whom shall we send?"

So it is with God's tasks. It is even harder to find men who will qualify here, to find men who will do His work and build His kingdom. Our movements and institutions seem vast and demanding and so they are, but they are small indeed beside His.

> God moves in a mysterious way
> His wonders to perform.
> He plants His footsteps in the sea
> And rides upon the storm.
>
> Deep in unfathomable mines
> Of never-failing skill,
> He treasures up His bright designs
> And works His sovereign will.

Before Him is the great onward movement of righteousness and peace throughout the earth. It is beyond all that we can conceive. And we pray to Him, in the words of the familiar poem by J. G. Holland:

> God give us men, a time like this demands
> Strong minds, great hearts, true faith and ready hands.

He might well answer by asking "Where will I find such men?" We must first give them to Him before He can give them back to us. The search for men goes on all the while.

Must He have men to do these things? Cannot He do without us? No, this is the way He must work. He does not do His task by command, by fiat, but through those who are committed to His will. He must find such people, for everything depends upon it. There is no compulsion here; there is no conscription in God's forces. All are volunteers. They come willingly or they cannot be used. He is searching everywhere, in the colleges, in the streets, in our homes, in our churches, for men and women on whose hearts His Cause can rest. His question resounds through all the avenues of our life today, "Whom shall I send and who will go for us?"

II

Think then of our own response. That must be made by ourselves alone. His call is not so personal as to embarrass us and to seem a requirement. The question which Isaiah heard was not addressed to him. His name was not attached to it. It was very general, as though God did not even know that Isaiah was there to hear. The question was simply hurled out for any to hear it who would: "Whom shall I send?"

Surely, somewhere, someone would respond. It was put thus generally in order that the response might be truly a man's own, freely made, issuing from his own desire and commitment. Anyone could take up the call. Others were there, no doubt, kneeling beside Isaiah. They may have heard this summons but never thought of it as applying to them. If questioned, they would say that it was only a general appeal. Their answer might be the familiar "Here am I, send him." Someone else will respond to it; it is not intended for me.

Isaiah felt it to be his own. He didn't know the nature of the task; he only knew that God was calling, that He needed a man. He had already yielded his will and he had already been cleansed and made ready. The answer came naturally as a result. It was as though his name was attached to it. The call seemed to come directly to him and to no other. This call which, to so many, seemed only abstract and general, to him was direct and personal. He knew that he must answer and that he must go. He replied ":Here am I, send me."

Appeals are being made to us on every hand. People in a community like this say, "There are too many appeals." We escape from them by saying that they are appeals in general. They come over the radio, in the newspapers, in meetings, in church services, but they are not for me. My name is not on any of them. Someone else may hear and heed, and that would be well. But they are not meant for me. So good causes languish for lack of help, and needy places remain needy because no one will go. Every generation pleads for those who can be sent to meet its needs. It cannot make people respond; it can only sound out the call, "Whom shall I send?" Whom shall I send into these areas of human need? Whom shall I send to speak for truth and right in all aspects of the world's life? All depends on whether there are those who hear the call, and know it is meant for them, and say, "Here am I, send me."

III

Finally, think of the power this gives to life. To be sent from God means that all the resources of the Divine are behind man. We often ask of people "Who sent you?" It makes a difference whom they represent. Their credentials are the more impressive if they are from someone whom we trust and respect. When people represent a cause or a leader, they are more than themselves and when we see them we see those who sent them.

Our own plans are important but they are as nothing compared with the plans of God and the need to fit one's life into them. Tennyson said:

Our wills are ours, we know
not how,
Our wills are ours to make
them Thine.

The highest use of the human will is to blend it, to merge it, to press it into conformity with the will of God.

When people come to us in special helpfulness, we feel that they bring more than themselves. They represent something greater. They may come with comfort, or with counsel, or with friendship, just at the time when we seem to need these gifts the most. We instinctively say, "God must have sent you to me." Here is something more than man's. Here is God sending forth others to minister in His name and equipped with His power.

The Bible is the account of God's sending of men. All through the Old Testament, they were sent. Then "there came a man sent from God whose name was John." There was no more accurate way of describing John the Baptist than this. He was not just a man, but a man who spoke for God. He had power in his words and in his life, because God had sent him.

Nor was this all. God sent yet another. Like the householder in a far country, in the parable of the wicked servants who had slain the previous messengers, God said, "I will send my Son. They will reverence Him." So Christ came, for God so loved the world that He gave His Son. All the care of God for the world was in Him, summoned up in Christ. "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father."

Yet we know what happened. Men would not accept His credentials. They regarded them as faked or forced. He was no Son of God; He had not been sent from Him. As they stood around the cross they mocked Him, saying, "If Thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross." He did not come, but hung there till He died. How absurd to think that here was a Man sent from God.

Yet ever since that time man has been forced to re-think what he did, to wonder why this happened, to confess in shame the awful error of this repudiation. For as men have thought of Him, of all that He was and said, of His birth and ministry and death and living presence, the truth has burst upon them and they have exclaimed as did the centurion who kept watch beside the cross through it all, "Truly this was the Son of God."

The temple is still here. It is not the kind in which Isaiah worshipped long ago, but the temple surrounds us now, and God is lifted up. And the call still comes. God wants men. We know as never before what the call means now. Because Christ has come, we see what we are to do. Whom shall I send to tell of Christ, to represent Christ, to speak for Him at work and at home and in the city and in the world? We know what the call means now. It is easier to see; it is harder to obey. "Whom shall I send and who will go for us?" The whole of Christian discipleship is in the answer; "Here am I, send me."

YOU CAN WIN OTHERS TO CHRIST

Homer J. R. Elford, Trinity Methodist Church, Youngstown, Ohio

Many of us have come to appreciate that laymen must join with ministers in trying to show that Christ has relevance for all of life—in the office, the shop, and the home. It is well that we sieze opportunities for the millions of unordained followers of Jesus to proclaim their convictions before their fellows. The practice of having lay people testify to the life-

giving power of Christ is in keeping with the Protestant principle of the universal priesthood of believers, a doctrine which maintains that every man is actually his own priest before God, that every man is responsible to God for his moral conduct, and that God is equally accessible to laymen and clergy.

In keeping with this basic idea that all of Christ's followers have equal challenge laid upon them to extend the Kingdom of God on earth, we come at length to feel a sense of compulsion about the matter of every Christian doing all he can to win others to Christ. One need not turn back many pages of history to discover the idea prevailing that the business of getting new people to be followers of Jesus was strictly a matter of concern to the clergy. There is no denying that those who choose the ministry as a profession and who prepare for and receive ordination from some religious group should feel that the saving of souls is their main business in their lifework. It must be confessed that too often clergymen have allowed themselves to become so absorbed with a multitude of business matters within and outside of the church that they have neglected their primary calling. Unfortunately some congregations so burden their ministers with trivial chores that this faulty emphasis is quite unavoidable. It might be a good time for the laymen to ask whether they are doing all they can to make it possible for their minister to do what he was ordained to do, or are they allowing his effectiveness to become weakened by tying him to a mimeograph or some other time-consuming device or work?

This matter of winning other people to Christ is not something reserved for the clergy alone. We have good basis for this in scripture. How often we need to recall that those first disciples were not professional religious leaders as we usually think of that office today. Their training had been for the work of fishermen, tax-collectors or tradesmen. Apparently our Lord felt that it would be much more effective for Him to take untutored men with rather run-of-the-mill capacities and develop them into disciplined followers than to take highly schooled men and try to win their enthusiasm for His cause of redeeming mankind.

The disciple Andrew illustrates our point in many ways. He was a fisherman. He had heard John the Baptist preaching about the coming Kingdom of God and the need for repentance by turning away from evil, selfish ways and turning to God. Andrew's sensitive spirit had responded to this call and he had been baptized of John. Now he eagerly looked forward to the one whom John said was to come who would reveal the "salvation of God." Thus it was that when Jesus appeared, Andrew recognized Him. In fact, the record indicates that Andrew was the very first to see in Jesus "the Lamb of God, the Saviour of the World." Very quickly he ran to tell his brother Simon, the man later to be known to us as Peter. Cut down to its bare facts we have here a picture which has been, and can be, re-enacted again and again. A fisherman listens to someone tell of the way to find God; he responds; he finds that Way, that Truth and that Life, and then he very simply and directly tells his closest relative or friend about it and brings that person to this fountain of Life. The New Testament gives us only small data about the life and work of Andrew, but whenever you find him —either bringing the lad with the few loaves and fishes to Jesus that our Lord may feed the multitude, or introducing the Greeks to Jesus—he is bringing someone else to Jesus. No wonder, is it, that Andrew has come to be known as "the Friend"?

Even though Andrew is not mentioned in the Book of Acts or the Letters of Paul, tradition provides us with inspiring stories of his con-

tinuing influence. Some say he carried the Gospel to Russia, Greece, Asia Minor, and Turkey. It was early believed that he lived to a very old age and died a martyr's death on November 30 in the year 69 while in Greece. It is said that he was put on a cross shaped in the form of an "X". Tradition says that some 300 years later a missionary took portions of Andrew's body with him on a journey. Shipwrecked off the coast of Scotland, the missionary is said to have taken these sacred relics with him to that land and there built a chapel in Andrew's honor. In the Eighth Century priests of Scotland were erecting a St. Andrew's Cross on a battlefield to encouarge the Scottish army in a fight with England. Their king was so impressed that he led his army to victory, driving the English across the border. From that time on Scotland has used a white cross of St. Andrew on a blue background as its national emblem, and it later became a part of the British Union Jack flag. So deeply is St. Andrew woven into Scottish history that many people of Scotland observe November 30th, the anniversary of the martyrdom of St. Andrew, as a day of celebration. The Brotherhood of St. Andrew, the friend, is the basis for an order of young men in the Protestant Episcopal Church. It is founded on the idea of bringing young men to Jesus. Each member is expected to strive to bring a friend under the influence of the Gospel and to grasp his hand and place it in the hand of Jesus.

We take time to review these traditions that we may appreciate more fully the far-reaching effect of that humble fisherman of long ago. It may be that like Andrew, who brought Simon Peter, the man who became a dynamic leader, we will find that the people we bring to Jesus will eventually come to be more influential than we. If we are truly Christian we will glory in that humble role. As we very simply and sincerely invite others to meet Jesus; as we invite them to attend church with us; as we grasp their hands and do our best to put them into the hands of Jesus, we will serve our Lord in the very best possible way. And the beauty of it is that anyone who has any real conviction about the Lordship of Jesus can do this. If you forget everything else I have said, remember this: You can win others for Christ.

GOD'S MIGHTY ARMY?

Arthur H. Kolsti, First Congregational Church, Indianapolis, Indiana

Take a census of all the congregation of the people of Israel . . . all in Israel who are able to go forth to war. Numbers 1:2

Still riding the crest of popularity on TV are stories of the Old West that take for their setting the days when gunslingers like Doc Holiday, the Duttons, Jesse Chisholm, and Billy the Kid were hunted by lawmen like Wyatt Earp and Wild Bill Hickock. In those days the world's finest light cavalry, the Ogalalla Sioux, roamed the warpath under chiefs like Red Cloud, Sitting Bull, and Crazy Horse. In those days the wagon trains struck out from St. Louis to wend their way to California or Oregon through the land of the Nez Perce, the Apache, and the Blackfoot.

Such times exert a continual appeal. We tend to idealize that period of our history, surround it with legend, and look back at it with nostalgia. To offset this there are those whose research will uncover facts to deflate our legends. Take, for example, the idealized version of General Custer and his troopers. Western films that

I remember from boyhood often presented Custer as the victim of Indian treachery. The facts of history tell a different story. The Sioux nation was at war with the United States Government because the treaty guaranteeing the Black Hills to the Indians had been broken. General Custer was in enemy territory. He had recklessly overextended himself beyond a main force approaching under General Kearny. His troops were met and overcome by a superior enemy force. In belated recognition of the Indian side of the story, a national monument to Crazy Horse has been erected in the Black Hills.

I

We find this same mixture of idealization and factual reporting in the Book of Numbers. This book tells of stories during the "cowboys and Indians" period of Israelite history. In those days the Hebrews were migratory herdsmen and warriors who pushed into the rugged tracts of land between Egypt and Palestine. Theye were pioneers who faced all the attendant dangers of a frontier situation. A later settled generation looked back with nostalgia to those days. Some saw them as the time when Israel had walked faithfully with God. Others saw them a bit more realistically. Both points of view are woven into the narrative of Numbers. At a time when the children of Israel were again captive in an alien land, the priests compiled these traditions, not only to tell a pious story, but to score a theological point upon their own generation. The ancient priests have something to say to us if we will listen.

Upon opening the Book of Numbers we find ourselves at the foot of Mount Sinai shortly after the exodus. The air is filled with expectancy. The expedition to Canaan is about to start. Moses has ordered a count of all the men able to bear arms. The warriors have been assembled and the scene before us is that of a mighty army. We see the standards of the tribes and clans, their javelins raised in the air. We sense the preparation for battle. God's mighty army is going forth to fight battles in His name and win victories for Him. Or is it?

Take a close look at this army arrayed before us in the first chapter of Numbers. What can we say about it? One thing is obvious, it is a big army. We are told there are over 600,000 men at arms. That would be a good sized land force in any day. We would expect such an army to march right in to Canaan and take over. If chapter one tells of such a mighty army, the ensuing chapters ought to tell of furious campaigns and great victories. But the record does not read that way. This army did not go anywhere. This army fought no major battles. This army got no further than Kadesh-Barnea, one hundred and fifty miles away. This is an army that floundered for forty years.

Look again at the number 600,000. If there were 600,000 warriors, that would mean about two million Hebrews. That is an unlikely number. The priest who wrote this story could count. He knew this was an exaggeration. But see what he has done. He has depicted an ironic situation. Here is the great army that did not fight any battles. There is a good deal of war talk and no war. The efficiency rating of this unit turns out to be zero.

So we cannot help raising a question mark over this picture of God's mighty army. Some annoying doubts present themselves. These doubts are ours today when we look at the Church spread out in battle formation. It is a big Church; there is no doubt about that. In fact, numbering the people of God has been a favorite occupation in recent years. It gives us a good feeling to hear church leaders announce new highs in church membership. It gives a good feeling in the local church to be able to recite impressive statistics. But the doubts persist about the real

efficiency of this mighty army of God.

Somewhere in the Carolinas there is a church that has its name on a large sign along the roadside. It is called the "Big Bluff Christian Church." This is suggestive. The army in Numbers was certainly "The Big Bluff Army." We do well to ask ourselves, "Is the Church bluffing?" We hear a great deal of war talk within the camp about winning the world, saving the world, changing the community, but few major campaigns are being planned. Calls to action evoke the response of inaction. "Like a Mighty Army Moves the Church of God." This poses a problem in punctuation. Shall we use an exclamation point or a question mark.

The old priest was addressing himself to a small group of exiles who faced a hard task. He certainly wanted them to know that an effective army is not necessarily a big army. One thing he would tell us is that the efficiency of the Church is not measured by her size. There are certain qualities without which the church's score of victories won will be zero. In rough strokes, I would list these qualities as discipline, a readiness to engage the world, an understanding of the challenge, and a concern for the Great Church.

II

Consider the matter of discipline. In Egypt the Hebrews had been provided for by their Egyptian masters. In the wilderness they soon discovered that survival itself was impossible unless they learned the rigorous disciplines of the desert. An effective army depends upon discipline. So does an effective life. Nor is there any substitute in the effective Christian life for those personal, evangelical disciplines of prayer, personal earnestness, and sacrifice. When Jesus returned to the foot of the mount of Transfiguration with Peter, James, and John, He found the other disciples trying to cure an epileptic boy and failing miserably. When the Master came they asked, "Why could we not cast it out?" He replied piercingly, "This kind cannot be driven out except by prayer and fasting." There are many demons in our modern life that will yield only to rigorous spiritual disciplines.

Some interesting light is shed on our national character by recent remarks from the Department of Health and Welfare. Americans are now being taken to the tune of one hundred million dollars a year by the promises of so-called reducing machines and devices. The Department warns that these machines are useless. There is no better way to control weight than to eat less. Our society gives us many substitutes for our own labor, and the promise to make things continually easier conspires to make us soft. Whether it be in the care of the body or the nurture of the spirit, there is no substitute for our personal discipline.

The whole Christian army depends on the effectiveness of the individual Christian. Gandhi put his finger on the crux of the matter when he advised Indian Christians: "First, I would suggest that all of you Christians begin to live more like Jesus Christ. Second, practice your religion without adulterating it or toning it down. Third, emphasize love and make it your working force, for love is central in Christianity."

The discipline of which we speak is also a corporate discipline. One of the by products of our own denomination's study of the draft constitution of the United Church of Christ may well be a rediscovery of those traditional disciplines that have been practiced for years in the relations among our churches. Without orderly procedures and disciplines there is neither freedom nor effect. The Israelites did not have an army; they had a collection of tribes. Without order within the church, you have not a church but a collection of egoisms.

This corporate discipline stems from the recognition that the Church re-

ceives her life from God and not from within herself. This is what we mean when we speak of the Headship of Jesus Christ. When we look within ourselves for the meaning of the Church, we will begin to lose the Church idea. We then become as Forsythe put it, a collection of affinities and sentiments rather than a consecrated company under one Head. One of the great lessons that Israel learned in the wilderness was that of dependence upon Him who sustained the life of the company.

Someone asked Mark Twain if he wished to buy a ticket to a lecture by the noted agnostic, Robert Ingersoll, upon the subject, "The Mistakes of Moses." Mark Twain replied, "I would not pay one cent to hear Robert Ingersoll lecture on the mistakes of Moses, but I would pay a great deal to hear Moses lecture on the mistakes of Robert Ingersoll." One feels that at times we members of the Protestant Family have been looking through the wrong end of the telescope. We have been more concerned with what Congregationalists, Baptists, or Methodists believe about God and not concerned enough about the more important matter, what God believes about Congregationalists, Baptists, Methodists, and others.

III

An effective Church will be a disciplined body. It will also possess a readiness to engage the enemy. An army that spends all its time in dress parades is a strange kind of army. The army that Moses led from Sinai showed a strange reluctance to fight any battles. One notices in many quarters of the Church, a reluctance to aim our guns at the major public questions of the day—race relations, war and peace, a sex-saturated materialism, the creation of an orderly world community, nuclear warfare and the Christian conscience.

One of the serious questions that can be asked about mass revival campaigns is this: Are these campaigns merely religious activities that provide a substitute for moral action in and on the world? Concern for saving individual souls is important but there is no such thing as an individual apart from his culture and his society. Any effective campaign is called to direct itself also at those evil forces that infect the social order and pervert our institutions.

Such concern, however, would move the Church out into a combat area and it is much safer to stay behind the lines. One of Bill Mauldin's memorable cartoons in "Stars and Stripes" during World War II depicted two snarling GI's seated in front of a little French cafe. They looked pugnacious. Two tired infantrymen on rest leave were looking at them and one observed, "We calls 'em garritroopers. They're far enough up front so's they don't have to wear neck ties, and far enough back so's they won't get shot at." A good many in the Lord's army prefer just enough piety to appear Christian, but not enough to become dangerous.

The object of an army of infantry is to draw the fire of the enemy, uncover his position, and engage him in action. It is a strange army that is not combat ready. The army that Moses led showed a strange reluctance really to go to war.

One always wonders what the history of Russia would be like today if that nation had been blessed with a Church that fought real battles. We catch a glimpse of the kind of problems that occupied Russian churchmen when we look at the history of the Old Believers, a group that broke with Orthodoxy three hundred years ago. At that time a peasant priest arose who became a notorious ecclesiastical crusader. He was the Patriach, Nikon, who fought within the Church for the kind of faith Christ would honor. Nikon demanded that the sign of the cross be made with three fingers instead of

two. He insisted upon a threefold instead of a twofold allelujah in the liturgy. Nikon said God was troubled by these errors. God was also bothered, said Nikon, by the way the name of Jesus was spelled. The Church had been using Isus. Nikon claimed they should use Iisus. These were the battles some churchmen were fighting at a time when corruption was rampant in the Czarist regime and when Polish and Russian Christians were killing each other on the battlefield. One wonders if the history of that nation would be different had the Church fought real battles.

IV

Another quality to an effective Church will be an understanding of the challenge in front of it. A reason this Hebrew army failed was its inability rightly to measure the task it faced. Here were a group of people who had been suddenly ejected from the world of Egyptian paternalism into a rugged wilderness. They were not ready for change, and under the pressure of new conditions the army broke down. They were caught in a crisis of history for which they were ill-prepared.

Is there an analogy here to world-wide Protestantism adrift in a changing world? Our churches have been literally caught unawares by a crisis of history. Look at our churches as they entered the twentieth century. On the European continent Protestantism had settled into a comfortable reliance on the state. In England the church had become primarily the province of the middle classes. In America under the influence of the frontier, church life had become highly individualistic. In all places the churches were unprepared for the moral explosions of this century. The disjointed Christianity of the nineteenth century was no match for the highly organized evil powers of the twentieth, the industrialization that suddenly created one world in fact, the centralization that deposited more and more power in fewer and fewer hands. The impact of these events explains much of the impetus given to the growth of the ecumenical movement and a universal consciousness within the church. The Church today faces a totally new kind of world. The comfort of Egypt is behind us, and what sufficed there will not suffice in the wilderness.

This leads naturally to the statement that an effective Church will be a church in which there is a concern for the Great Church. The Hebrews who marched from Sinai were a collection of tribes. Not until they made tribal loyalty contributary to the larger company could they occupy Canaan.

Throughout Protestantism we desperately need a vision of the Great Church as she moves through history. If there is any concern I could lay upon you it would be the cry of John Knox, "The Kirk, the Kirk, the Kirk." Knox spent his life in a fight to build a Great Church. Death came upon him with his work unfinished, the Church still divided and insecure. In the fever of his last days he kept repeating the passion of his life: "The Kirk, the Kirk, the Kirk." Who is concerned about the Church, the great historic Church of Jesus.

The little daughter of a farmer had wandered into the tall grasses that surrounded her house. The farmer enlisted the help of several neighbors and they searched in vain for several hours. As the day declined and the cold grew more severe, the farmer's anxiety increased. Then one of the searcher's made a suggestion: "The grass and weeds are quite thick; it is easy for us to miss several places. I suggest we join hands, mark our starting place, and go through the undergrowth like a large rake." All agreed and they joined hands. In less than half an hour they came upon the little girl, but it was too late. She was dead from cold and exposure. Then the farmer cried out in anguish, "In God's name, why didn't we join hands before?"

Is time running out for our divided Christendom? The army that marched from Sinai perished in the wilderness. Their discipline broke under pressure, they fought no major battles and won no lasting victories, and they wandered in a world that baffled them. We sing, "Like a mighty army moves the Church of God." Does she? Can she? Will she?

ON SPREADING THE PROPER PROPAGANDA

William Goddard Sherman, Melrose Park Methodist Church, Fort Lauderdale, Florida

When it first began to be mentioned that Kruschev might visit the United States it was regarded as an educational tour, by which was meant that Mr. Khruschev would come in an effort to learn about us. But soon after his arrival it became apparent that he meant it to be an education for us. He seemed quite uninterested when he was doing the seeing, but he warmed to his task when he was being seen. His visit was, in a very real sense, propaganda.

Amiel, writing in his Journal many years ago, suggested that every life is propaganda either for the good or for the evil. The life we live, regardless of how unintentional it may be, is a firm announcement of our convictions and a clear advertisement for the things we believe.

We recognize this readily in terms of lives which stood forcefully for some cause. One thinks of Jesus and the all-consuming passion of his life, to bring men into a deeper relationship with God. His ministry from beginning to end was a ringing testimony of whom he was and what he believed. The same is true of all great men and women whose lives have been dedicated to some conviction: Thomas Jefferson and democracy; Lincoln and the preservation of the Union; Horace Mann and education; Susan B. Anthony and the rights of women.

Every life is propaganda for our deepest convictions. The ideas which our minds regard as basic are the foundations upon which we build. Our lives, therefore, become the visible testimony of what we believe. It is not necessary to make public speeches about our convictions nor announce ourselves as advocates of any particular cause. Only our lives, the day by day run of events and our actions and reactions in their regard—this is all the world needs to judge what kind of propaganda we are circulating.

I

Consider this regard to religion. Our behavior will inevitably say something about what we think of God and how we understand Him. We may not have any clear-cut theology worked out in our minds, but an attitude concerning Him will nonetheless be worked out in our lives.

Religion, at its very base, is not a theory about God, but a relation to God. The religious history of any people is quite simply a history of their relationship to the Almighty. Their lives, in whatever century they lived, are a testimony—propaganda—for certain concepts which they held.

If we turn to the religious history of the most ancient people of the Bible, we discover that to them God was no more than a mountain deity. It is not a question of whether they wrote theological treatises discussing the divine nature. The simple fact is that the testimony of their behavior toward God indicates their primitive concept. When Moses sought to speak with Him, it was necessary for the prophet to ascend Mt. Sinai. This was not because Moses wanted solitude for his time of meditation, but because this was the dwelling-place of Jehovah. One who wished to speak with Deity must go to the place where Deity dwelt.

The early testimony is also that an ancient people did not regard the divine nature as we do today in the light of the Christian awareness. We have been taught that God is love, but the children of Israel were terrified before Him. He was a god of warfare. Our Christian concept of a loving Father full of compassion is decidedly absent from the picture in Exodus:

> Jehovah is a man of war:
> Jehovah is his name.

The point is that these ancient people were not writing theological treatises on the nature of God, but their lives in relationship to the Deity testifies to their fundamental conviction.

One of the prevalent ideas of God is that He is the Absolute—a vague kind of Being beyond us and having little bearing upon our lives. An old fable tells of a lion that invited all the other animals to his den for a visit. Many accepted, but a wise old fox refused to enter when he observed that all of the footprints pointed in one direction—toward the lion's den. The visitors were neatly absorbed! So there are those who testify of this conviction about God. Humanity, in their thinking, eventually becomes absorbed in some vague way into a distant Absolute.

I have usually observed that those who hold such a foggy concept also testify of a spiritual loneliness. God is both unreal and also incapable of any relationship to our individual lives. As Strauss observed, "The Absolute does not descend into history." The great poet Goethe pointed out that we cannot be contented until we have "faith enough to make real the things of God."

The whole tenor of our being is propaganda in a very real sense, for it speaks convincingly either for or against our faith in God as a Living Presence in whose fellowship we can find reality.

II

A cracker-barrel philosopher one time said that many persons have a perspective of life about as accurate as though they were standing on their heads. Particularly is this true in the area of good and evil. Rubbing against life's jagged edges they conclude that there is a cruel Fate which seems to be in control, and that we really do not stand a fair chance.

How many times do we hear the mournful complaint which came to me just a week ago: "Why does God allow good people to suffer so much when all those crooks are happy?" Through the years the question is asked in one way or another, but it always goes back in essence to the problem which Job voiced: Why do the righteous suffer?

These questions, and our whole attitude toward the sorrows which come to us, are testimony of our basic faith. What we at bottom believe about good and evil will become apparent on the surface of our living.

One of the severest criticisms leveled at Ralph Waldo Emerson concerns his rock-ribbed optimism. In some writers we are brought face to face with a devastating skepticism which continually enshrouds. With Emerson it is the reverse, for his testimony is of a perennial joyousness which cannot be defeated. He has been accused of seeing life in part only, and yet what one of us does not have merely a fragmentary view of life? But this optimism was not the result of a life of ease, free from all burden. Plagued by tuberculosis, which he called, "the mouse in my chest," he knew pain. Sorrow in large measure came to him as he buried his first wife, his two talented brothers, and his five year old son.

It may be true that Emerson's was a rampant optimism, out of balance with the total picture of reality. Yet he himself observed that "no picture of life can have any veracity that does not admit the odious facts." It is just possible that this optimism-

gone-wild was, rather than ignorance of the facts, a glowing testimony of faith despite the facts. And at its very heart the Christian Gospel is a message of redeeming love which gives us the strength to triumph over the afflictions which come to us.

Jesus faced his crucifixion with this kind of optimism. The cross and its agony were all too real, and Jesus does not close his eyes to their reality. He was deeply aware of the "odious facts." But he was also gloriously conscious of an overcoming Fact: the divine Presence in the midst of the tragic moment.

We must discover the passage between the Scylla of pessimism and the Charybdis of extreme optimism. It is imperative that we find between the two a balance which will enable us to recognize the existence of odious facts without being destroyed by a pessimism concerning them.

III

That which we believe in our hearts is what determines our attitude toward life's moving events. If we feel, as a poet describes the human situation,

> prisoners in this world
> Of coins and wires and motor-horns

then we shall indeed be swallowed in skepticism and fear. No one who believes that a blind Fate controls us and holds us captive in a world devoid of divine sanction can look with optimism upon the flow of events. Our reaction to these events gives clear testimony of our deepest convictions. James Russell Lowell rightly suggests that life would be

> Fruitless, except we now and then divined
> A mystery of Purpose, gleaming through
> The secular confusions of the world.

A few years ago Professor Charles ("Pat") McConnell and his wife were in our home for dinner prior to his preaching at the evening service. A day or so later I learned that when they returned home Mrs. McConnell was suddenly stricken and died. Later that week Pat said these words to me: "Either you believe in immortality or you don't. I do." In his reaction to the sorrow which had come to him, Pat preached a greater sermon than he had delivered from the pulpit a few evenings before. And so every life is testimony of the things which are basic in the human heart.

When Khrushchev first announced his wish to visit America a keen news analyst remarked: "It is certain he is coming to spread Communist propaganda." It is now quite clear that this was so. It is just as true that every life, in a very real sense, is as Amiel long ago pointed out, propaganda for good or evil. When we come to measure the total impact of our behavior, what will be the lingering testimony of our lives?

BOOKS FOR PULPIT PREACHING

from page 2

Lively May I Walk, fifty-four devotions for older persons, by Glenn H. Asquith, ought to meet a need for those wishing to realize the meaning of Browning's words, "The best is yet to be." Each meditation contains a scripture, prayer, and also an inspirational observation on the best which life and faith offer not only for the golden years but also for other days in our pilgrimage. (Abingdon, 123 pp. $2)

A Protestant Speaks His Mind by Elion T. Jones is a candid probing of the tensions which exist and are apparently increasing between Roman Catholics and Protestants. The author provides historical, Biblical, theological, and factual information essential for a proper evaluation of the issues which exist and the ways by which these issues

may be resolved. The book's message is timely and forthright. (Westminster, 237 pp., $3.95)

Varieties of Protestantism by John B. Cobb, Jr., is a valuable attempt to offer an understanding of Protestants, less according to organization and official teaching and more according to the diversities at the deep level of spiritual orientation and commitment. Nine types of Protestantism are interpreted in terms of their inner meanings to their adherents. The book is written with a sympathetic understanding of these diversities and the bases upon which cooperative endeavor may be premised. (Westminster, 271 pp., $4.50)

Christianity and Communism Today by John C. Bennett is an updated edition of the author's earlier study which interpreted Communism as a faith and an ideology. Perhaps no other volume makes so clear the elemental differences between these two great forces, the struggles now taking place within Communism, the Christian's attitude toward topics such as co-existence, and the responsible role which Christians should pursue. (Association, 188 pp., $3.50)

Spiritual Therapy by Richard K. Young and Albert L. Meiburg shows ways the physician, psychiatrist and minister collaborate in healing. The book evidently was written after a senior editor of Reader's Digest drew national attention to the authors' work in the North Carolina Baptist Hospital. These case studies delineate spiritual therapy which has been employed with patients having a variety of specific ailments. (Harper, 184 pp., $3.50)

Laying Hold of God's Power

Ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.

John 15:7

Scientists are aware of the fact of the presence of unlimited power in the universe. A few weeks ago I saw a little part of that great new H-bomb plant being built on the Savannah River below Augusta. That is the biggest construction job ever undertaken by man since the beginning of time. We are spending hundreds of millions of dollars to harness a small part of that power.

Why is that power in the universe? Because when God created the heavens and the earth He put it there. However, man today is emphasizing the destruction of that power. We talk about how it can destroy a great city with one awful blast. Some day, I pray, we will beat our swords into plowshares and use that power for man's development and good.

Atomic power is now in the stage of development that electricity would be if the only use we made of it was the electric chair with which to electrocute people, and forgot all about using it to run our factories, pull our busses, light up our homes, heal through X-ray, and all the many other uses for good.

So with the power of God. A preacher might talk about God's power to punish the sinner, even utterly to destroy the earth. Thus we use that power to instill fear in the hearts of men. Far better, it seems to me, to emphasize to defeated and frustrated people, "I can do all things through Christ w h i c h strengtheneth me" (Philippians 4:13).

We need to be aware of the fact that right in the very atmosphere in which you are, there is enough power to take care of every need of your life until the day you die. Instead of thinking of the power of God to punish, emphasize the use of His power to meet your every need. "Ask what ye will," He said.

As Phillips Brooks said: "Prayer is not overcoming God's reluctance; it is taking hold of God's willingness."

I

For the scientists to believe that atomic power exists is not all that is necessary. He must find the proper technique to release that power. So, just for the Christian to believe in the power of God is not enough. He must learn the techniques of laying hold of that power.

Jesus gives us many. For example, He says, "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you" (John 15:7). But before you ask, you must meet the condition of that "'if," which is to "abide" in Christ.

Once two men were out fishing. A storm came up and it seemed their small boat would sink. Finally, one man began to pray. He said, "Lord, I have not asked you for anything for fifteen years, and if you will save us from this storm, I will not bother you again for another fifteen years."

We smile at that story, yet that is the practice of a lot of us. I get letters every day asking me to pray for certain people. I appreciate the letters. I do pray with all my faith, and, thank God, many s e e m i n g miracles have happened. Yet prayer is something far more than salvation in a crisis. "If ye abide in me," He said.

"Abiding" in Christ is one way of taking hold of this marvelous power for life. What does it mean to abide?

To abide means to live with, to settle down, to remain. It is not a hit and run matter; it is a long-term word. Henry Drummond, a great spiritual genius, once said: "Ten minutes every day in the company of Christ, aye, two minutes thus spent every day will make your whole life different."

People have told me they have prayed all night. I have never done that. In fact, I doubt anybody praying all night. An ordinary human mind is incapable of such sustained concentration. I doubt if many people could really pray for one hour. Henry Drummond first said ten minutes but quickly changed it to two minutes a day. To spend even two minutes consciously and determinedly in the presence of Christ is a very difficult task. The mind wanders before we realize it.

The only way you can abide in Christ, even for two minutes, is to form mental pictures of Him. If you are conscious of your sins, read John 8:3-11, the story of Christ forgiving the woman, until every detail of that scene is clear and sharp in your thinking. If you are nervous and upset, get the picture of Him stilling the tempest in Mark 4:35-41. As you read and study the four gospels, you develop in your mind a library of short motion pictures of His life and you can show them on the screen of your mind. In that way Christ becomes very real to you. He becomes actually a part of you.

Remember He said, "If ye abide in me and my words abide in you—(even for just two minutes a day, said Henry Drummond)—ye shall ask what ye will and it shall be done unto you."

James Stalker in his "Imago Christi" wrote: "A wise man once said to me that he was too busy to be in a hurry." Take two minutes a day in complete concentration with Christ. You will begin to see a marvelous miracle happen within you.

II

"Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do," said our Lord (John 14:13). Asking in His "name" is a method of laying hold of the willing power of God. That means asking according to the spirit of Christ, in harmony with His thinking, in line with His purpose.

Here is an example. Madame Chiang Kai-shek relates how her mother, a devout Christian, would spend much time in prayer in a room on the third floor of their home. At the time of the Manchurian invasion Madame Chiang said one day to her mother: "Mother, you are so powerful in prayer, why don't you pray that God will annihilate Japan by an earthquake or something?"

Her mother looked gravely at her and said: "When you pray or expect me to pray, don't insult God's intelligence by asking Him to do something which would be unworthy of you, a mortal." "After that," said Madame Chiang, "I could pray for the Japanese people."

Jesus did not pray as He was facing supreme agony, "Let this cup pass." Instead, He prayed, "If it be possible." Certainly it was within God's power to save Him from the cross. In that sense it was useless to say, "If it be possible." What He meant, "If it can be according to Thy spirit and planning and Thy perfect will in Thy eternal purpose."

Let me say three things about that: (1) God's purpose includes all people and thus we cannot expect Him to aid us to the harm of someone else. I am reminded of the farmer who came to his pastor and asked him to pray for rain. His farm was in the hills where the soil was thin and rocky. The hot sun quickly dried out the moisture and his crop needed rain. The pastor readily agreed to pray for rain.

However, the next day another farmer, who was also his parishioner, came to his pastor asking that he pray that it not rain. His farm was

down in the lowlands by the river. His land was wet and sodden and he needed a hot spell of sunshine. So, to ask God to help one was to hurt another. Therefore, the minister prayed that each would be given a harvest in the "name" of Christ, according to the higher intelligence of God.

I might want a fine car, and most of us do, but it would sound silly to pray, "Lord, give me a fine car that I might ride more comfortably than the fellow who has to ride in a cheap car," Or, "that I might outshine my neighbors."

In "The Rhyme of the Ancient Mariner," Samuel Taylor Coleridge said it well: "He prayeth well who loveth well, both man and bird and beast. . . He prayeth best who loveth best all things, both great and small. . . . For the dear God who loveth us He made and loveth all."

When I pray in Christ's name, immediately my prayer becomes utterly unselfish and I become concerned about the well-being of all peoples, both present and future. Sometimes for God to answer a prayer for an individual would mean hurt for the human family and, of course, God's ultimate plan is for His entire family.

(2) When you pray in Christ's name, that is according to His spirit and purpose, it means that you are not asking God to do for you what He rightfully expects you to do for yourself. One meaning of praying in Christ's name is "Lord, show me how I might co-operate with you in the accomplishment of Thy purpose in my life."

In school I never flunked but one course, but I remember that one vividly. It was eighth grade Latin. At that time I was far more interested in football, girls and other things and during the year I did not study my lessons. We came to the day of the final exam and I realized I had wasted my opportunities. I prayed fervently that God would help me pass but I flunked.

I might have said it does no good to pray. Instead, I repeated the course the next year and worked much harder. I learned some Latin that year that I remember even until now, but I learned something more important than Latin. I learned that God helps those who help themselves. I never flunked another course.

Even Mohammed understood this. He said, "Whatever God hath ordained can be attained only by striving." Or as Augustine put it: "Without God, we cannot. Without us, God will not."

Jesus said, "Ask-seek-knock." To ask implies a sense of need that you cannot of yourself supply. If you already have something or if you obtain it merely within your own efforts, then there is no need to ask for it. To ask in prayer means that you believe there is a God who will hear and who is able to supply your need.

But we are also to "seek" and that means asking plus effort. It means that you will do all you can to answer your own prayer, trusting in God to take up where your own resources leave off. Then we are to "knock," which means asking plus effort plus persistence. Some prayers God will answer immediately, others may take a year or longer, but you believe to the point you will not give up until the answer comes.

(3) To ask in Christ's name means that we trust the ultimate purpose of God. Sometimes God says no to our immediate prayer, in order to later be able to say yes to our larger and better prayer. An illustration I use frequently is how, as a little boy, I became strangely fascinated with the junk man.

One summer I rode with him nearly every day. He let me drive the horse and I loved it. When time for school to begin came, I said to my father I did not want to go to school. Instead, I wanted to be a junk man. My father said no, and I cried about it. He was wiser than I and, though

I did not realize it, I had far larger prayers later to come. I am glad now my prayer to be a junk man was refused. My prayer was answered by something so much better than I even asked for. As Tagore expressed it, "Thou didst save me by Thy hard refusals."

Prayer is not magic or favoritism. "If ye abide in me"—"In my name"—as the spirit of Christ becomes my spirit, the power of God becomes mine. But just as we cannot let our little boys have a real gun until they are developed enough to handle it, so I cannot expect my Father to place in my hands more power than I am good enough to handle.

To the extent that I have the spirit of Christ in my life do I have the power of God at my disposal.

———

The Will Of God

Not my will, but thine, be done. Luke 22:42

I believe there is nothing about which people are more confused than they are about "the will of God." Let me illustrate the confusion: A man's wife died and he said, "Well, I must accept it. It is the will of God." But that man was himself a doctor and for weeks he had been fighting for her life. Was he all that time fighting against the will of God? If she had recovered, would he not have called her recovery the will of God? Yet surely we cannot have it both ways.

A boy was killed in a raid on Berlin. His mother still says she is trying to bow to the will of God. But was it God's will? Or was it the will of Hitler?

A little boy in India died in the cholera epidemic. His father said, "It is the will of God." Close by his little girl was sleeping. Dr. Weatherhead said to this man: "Suppose someone crept up the steps onto the veranda tonight and deliberately put a wad of cotton soaked in cholera germ culture over your little girl's mouth, what would you think of that?"

"My God," he said, "what would I think about that? Nobody would do such a damnable thing.'" "But, John," his friend said quietly, "isn't that just what you have accused God of doing when you said it was His will? Call your little boy's death the result of mass ignorance, call it mass folly, call it mass sin, if you like, but don't call it the will of God. Surely we cannot identify as the will of God something for which a man would be locked up in jail, or put in a criminal lunatic asylum."

The will of God really should be divided into three parts: (1) the intentional will of God, (2) the circumstantial will of God, (3) the ultimate will of God. Dr. Leslie D. Weatherhead has written a book entitled, "The Will of God." I am taking my discussion of this subject from that little book.

I

Surely it was not God's intention that man should s u f f e r through ignorance, folly or sin. It was not God's intention that man should have poured upon him misery, unhappiness, disappointment and frustration, bereavement, calamity and ill health. We simply must break with the idea that everything that happens is the will of God in the sense of being His intention.

We turn back a hundred years and wonder that Christian men could sing hymns to God while dealing in the slave traffic. But, please God, a hundred years hence our descendants will turn back and become incredulous that we ever called ourselves by the name of Christ when His body was torn asunder by our narrow denominationalism, when we l e f t humanity to disease when medical knowledge was within our reach if we had only spent the money on research that we spent on battleships. Call many things evil, call some of them inevitable evil because of sin,

but don't call them the will of God.

There are, however, two difficulties: (1) The first might be put like this. You may say, "Yes, that's all very well, but people get a lot of comfort from supposing that their tragedies are the will of God. One can bear a thing if it is God's will. To say some tragedy is not God's will robs one of comfort.

But there is never any final comfort in a lie. Christ commanded that we should love Him not only with our hearts, but also with our minds. If one refuses to think things through, then he can never know the truth. Sometimes the truth is costly but only the truth can set men free. If my son were killed in war, instead of folding my hands and saying it is God's will, I would want to rise up to my full powers and so work for peace that war will be eliminated.

(2) Some of the greatest qualities in people are made by suffering, and therefore is not that suffering the will of God? But that statement is based on a false premise. Suffering does not make courage. It reveals the courage which one already has. Evil is never creative of good, though the circumstances may cause one to express the good which is within him.

God's intentional will for man and this world is not evil but good. And when you see His glory reflected in this lovely earth, in nature around us so full of His beauty, in poem and song, in picture, in music, in great architecture, in the lives of lovely people, in the happiness of a home, in the health of a body, then look to your Father in heaven and say, "Thy will be done."

And in so seeing God's will, let us dedicate ourselves that we may be made one in the glorious harmony of all things, that it may be done on earth as it is in heaven.

II

The "intentional" will of God is God's ideal plan for men. However, due to sin, ignorance, accident or other things, often God's perfect plan is defeated, thus, we must consider the "circumstantial" will of God, that is God's plan within the circumstances.

Here is an illustration of the circumstantial will of God. A father, in co-operation with his son, is planning for the boy's career. The will of both may have been, let us say, that the boy should become an architect. Then came the war. The boy is called into the armed forces by his country. It becomes the will of both the boy and the father that he answer the call. Now certainly it was not the father's intention that his son should risk his life on some bloody battlefield. But under the circumstances, it did become his will.

However, there is danger here. One can surrender to circumstances. It is easy to say, "Well, of course I wanted to do this and that, but I was the victim of illness or sorrow or frustration. So what could I do?" What we must do is to face honestly the circumstances and, with God's help, triumph over them. Jesus did not simply resign Himself to the cross. Instead, He made the cross the symbol of the triumphant use of evil in the cause of the holy purpose of God.

Consider, for example, the matter of illness. The will of God for man is perfect health. Other things being equal, God can use more effectively a body free of disease. Jesus would not have been a greater spiritual asset if He had been lame or diabetic or tubercular. But, if one becomes ill, then under the circumstances is it God's will for us to use our suffering in the development of our character and thereby making even an evil thing work for our good.

However, one might point out that, even though God does not intend for some things to happen, still we must admit He allows things to happen. Why does He allow sickness and accident? Part of that I cannot answer. Take the matter of disease, for example. We believe God made all things, thus we must believe He

made germs. Why germs were created, I do not know. Maybe germs also serve some good purpose, or maybe in the past they served. Also, God made the drugs to kill germs. Certainly it is His will that man discover how to protect himself from disease. That we are rapidly accomplishing.

III

In understanding the will of God, we must consider His "intentional" will which is God's ideal plan for men. Also, His "circumstantial" will which is God's plan within the circumstances. Also, His "ultimate" will—which is God's final realization of His purpose. Weatherhead makes this very clear in his little book, "The Will of God," which I am following in this discussion.

There is a sentence at the end of the book of Job which summarizes the ultimate will of God: "I know that thou canst do all things, and that no purpose of thine can be restrained"—or, as Moffatt translates it, "Nothing is too hard for thee."

The supreme example of God's will is the Cross. The intention of God was that men should follow Christ, not crucify Him. But due to the circumstances of man's sin and spiritual blindness, it was God's will that Christ should die on the Cross rather than run away. God's ultimate will is the redemption of man, thus, though men put God on the Cross, God is using the Cross as the instrument to bring about His ultimate will.

Picture in your mind some little children playing beside a tiny stream that runs down a mountain side. They get great fun out of damming up the stream and thus preventing the water from reaching the river below. However, not for long do the children defeat the purpose of the little stream. For at last the water shall run over the dam and go on down the river.

Our sin, ignorance or carelessness may for a time hold back the purposes of God, but I do not believe we ever finally defeat God's plan. We believe in the omnipotence of God. When we say God is all-powerful, we do not mean that nothing can happen unless it is God's plan. We mean that nothing can happen which can finally defeat Him.

But, a young wife may say, "My husband has been killed, and my two little children are left fatherless, and I am young, and life stretches on in an infinite loneliness. God's intention was for us to have a home. His will has now been forever defeated."

There is no easy answer to that and, without faith, there is no answer at all. But let us tenderly say one or two things. On Good Friday night eleven men said: "We trusted Him and we followed Him. It was His will to establish His kingdom. He told us so. And evil has been allowed to take Him from us. It's the end of everything." But they were wrong, weren't they?

And, "Because He lived, we shall live also." Death is never the end. Temporarily the stream of God's purpose may be dammed up, but not for long. In the meantime, we believe tht even our tragedies will be woven by Him into a perfect pattern. No matter what happens, we continue to walk the road with God and we have faith that in the end any sense of injustice or loss will be compensated for. God will finally triumph.

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How To Have The Peace Of God

One of the most appealing verses in the Bible is this one: "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (John 14:27).

It makes us feel good just to read that verse. Right now read it again. We feel drawn to those words like a thirsty man is drawn to a cool spring. More than anything else in this life we want inner peace. We

are so tired of living with our inner conflicts, tension and turmoil, and we would rather possess peace of mind and heart than anything else.

Peace is not something we search for and work for. Jesus said, "My peace I give unto you." He freely gives it. All that remains is for us to accept it. But in order to be able to accept His peace, there are three other things we must accept from Him—His pardon, His presence, and His purposes. Let's look at each of those.

I

First, we must accept His pardon. We have in mind some sin we have committed or some wrong of which we are ashamed. A sense of guilt haunts us and we are never able to get away from it. We are sorry for what we have done, we refuse to do it again, and sincerely we ask God to forgive us. God always forgives those who ask Him to and who really mean it. We remember the Bible says, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9).

But there is a curious quirk within the human mind that makes it hard for one to accept God's forgiveness. Knowing we have done wrong, we feel we deserve punishment and we live in constant dread and fear that something bad is going to happen to us. Subconsciously we say, "I've done wrong and someday I will pay for it." I went to the dentist the other day. He didn't hurt me but I kept expecting him to any moment. Thus I could not relax as long as I was in his chair. And the constant dread and fear of some dire punishment for our sins robs life of all chance of deep inner peace.

Well, one way to gain faith in the forgiveness of God is to practice forgiving other people. In fact, this is essential because Jesus said, "If you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you" (Matt. 6:14).

In his book, "Learning to Have Faith," Dr. John A. Redhead imagines a man with two buckets, one filled with water and the other with oil. Both are full to the brim. You cannot pour the oil into the other bucket because it is full. Also, the two would not mix.

Now, imagine that one of those buckets is you and the other is God. He wants to pour His forgiving love into your life but you are holding resentment toward some person and thus you have no room for God. Also, God's loving mercy and your unforgiving spirit won't mix. So, before you can accept His forgiveness, you must forgive that other person.

"My peace I give unto you," said Christ. Before you can accept His peace, you must first accept His pardon. Some have come to me in a hopeless condition, feeling they have committed some unpardonable sin.

I explain that the unpardonable sin means to become so hardened by sin that the soul loses its feeling. The very fact that one feels a sense of guilt is positive proof of his ability to receive pardon. So I suggested to that one that instead of concentrating on his sins, he fill his mind with the promises of God to forgive his sins. Note these words: "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out" (John 6:37); "Whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16); "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our transgressions from us" (Psalm 103:12); "Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more" (John 8:11).

Fix those words in your mind—"Him that cometh" . . . "Whosoever" . . . "Removed our transgressions from us" . . . "Sin no more." Those are God's words to you—accept His forgiveness and believe that you have received it.

II

Second, to accept His peace, we must accept His presence. At the beginning of the war in England, the

authorities evacuated the children from the areas under bombardment. But they soon discovered their mistake. They became emotionally upset. Though they were safe, and all their physical necessities provided for, being deprived of the love and companionship of their parents did them great harm.

So it is with us. We may live in the finest house, eat the best food and have all the things money can buy, still without the fellowship of our Heavenly Father, we remain restless and without inner peace.

The Bible says, "Be still, and know that I am God" (Psalm 46:10). Also, "In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength" (Isaiah 30:15). Stillness, quietness—that is the greatest need of multitudes in the noisy, hurrying life of today. Note an amazing statement of Starr Daily, a man who knows much about the art of spiritual healing. He said, "No man or woman of my acquaintance who knows how to practice silence and does it has ever been sick to my knowledge."

Surely, the practice of silence is more soothing and healing than most medicines. How can one learn the art of stillness, of quietness, of silence? Pascal, the great scientist, said, "After observing human kind over a long period of years, I came to the conclusion that one of man's great troubles is his inability to be still."

I was on a plane the other day when the captain announced over the speakers, "I am now going to cut the motors momentarily to make an adjustment to allow us to climb higher." To climb higher, man needs to learn to "cut his motor" and to make adjustments.

The Bible says, "Be still, and know that I am God" (Psalm 46:10). There is tremendous power to be gained from completely silencing the mind but it isn't easy to do. Here is one way to accomplish it:

Go alone to the quietest place available to you. Do not read. Do not write. Begin by letting a mental picture of the most peaceful scene you have ever witnessed pass across your mind. Some months ago I spent two weeks at Sea Island. Under the spell of that lovely place, every bit of the tension and hurry of life was drained out of me and I became completely relaxed. But for me, the benefits of Sea Island are not limited to the actual days I was there. I enjoy that experience again and again as I sit quietly and begin to see in my mind the ocean, the waves rolling up on the beach and back again, the gentle swaying of the sea grass. Through the power of imagination, one can quickly transport himself back into that peaceful scene and experience its healing influences.

Then, under that spell, begin to repeat audibly some peaceful words. Words have great suggestive power. Speak words like earthquake, murder, house on fire, cancer, blood—and you feel nervousness. But words like tranquility, serenity, imperturbable—such words create within you the mood they describe. Repeat them out loud, slowly and thoughtfully.

Have you ever dropped a pebble into a very still pond and watched the tiny waves go out over the surface of the water? Now while your mind is quiet, drop into it some of the great truths of God from the Bible such as "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want"—"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me"—"The eternal God is my refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms."

Usually in this moment some lines of some of the songs I love will come to mind—"What a friend we have in Jesus, All our sins and griefs to bear"—"Jesus calls us, o'er the tumult of our life's wild, restless sea; Day by day his sweet voice soundeth, Saying, 'Christian follow me'."

III

Then, realizing God's pardon and experiencing His presence, you make the third acceptance necessary to the

acceptance of His peace: you accept God's purposes. One of the primary causes of inner tension is mental disorganization. We have not learned to take up one thing at a time and concentrate upon that. And above the daily routine of life, we have no guiding goals and purposes.

We remember the experience of the Master in Gethsemane. He got away from the crowd, even away from His closest friends. He got quiet and alone with God and then He said, "Nevertheless, not my will but thine be done" (Luke 22:42). And who doubts but that in that moment all the inner strain and tension left Him. It is truly written, "In His will is our peace."

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I Believe In God

When someone asked me to write on "Why I Believe in God," I thought that it would be easy for me to do so. Quickly I can think of a dozen reasons why one believes in God, but as I look at those reasons I know they are not my reasons. My books on theology give the arguments for God and studying those books has strengthened my faith and confirmed my beliefs.

But it would not be honest for me to copy the reasons for belief in God from my books and give them as my reasons. The fact is, I believed in God long before I ever studied theology. The more I think about it, the more I realize I believed before I knew the reasons. I know now that it is necessary for me to breathe and that without air I would die. But long b e f o r e I knew that, I just breathed.

I was born into a home where prayer was heard regularly. I did not question that there was a God to hear those prayers, I just accepted the fact. I was carried to church and it has always seemed normal and right for me to belong to the church. Long before I knew how the church came to be or the reasons for its existence, I felt at home in it. I am a Christian and day by day, as I learn more about Christ, I love Him more and depend on Him more for the salvation of my soul. But I do not know when I became a Christian. For more than twenty years I have given my life to the ministry and I am sure that is what I should do. But I do not remember when I decided for the ministry. I never thought of doing anything else. I think God created me for that purpose and put it into my mind at birth.

In an American court of law a person is presumed to be innocent until he is proven guilty. So it is with my own belief in God. Instead of saying I will not believe until God's existence is proven, I believed and will continue to believe until it is proven there is no God. Up to now I have never had any cause to doubt the existence of God. Thus I have never felt the necessity of trying to prove Him.

The Bible feels no necessity for proving God, for it assumes God's existence. The Bible's very first words are: "In the beginning God," and then it goes on to give us a progressive revelation of God. Moses teaches us the laws of God, Amos reveals His justice, in Hosea we see His love, the Psalms lead us to communion with Him, Micah tells us of His ethical standards, and Christ gives us the full revelation of the Father.

Jesus said to His disciples, "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God" (John 14:1). He did not say, "If you believe" or "You should believe." He simply said, "Ye believe" and went on to tell them of the Father's house and the way to it.

God did not depend on reasons or arguments for our belief in Him. God took care of that in our creation. Call it instinct, insight, intuition, or by any other name, we were born believing. As we study and learn, as we live and experience, our belief

can be strengthened and enlarged. Or our belief can be perverted and misdirected. Therein lies the danger. The Ten Commandments do not command us to believe, but they do command us to keep God as the first object of our worship.

I

One does not need to understand God in order to believe in Him. The fact is we understand very few things that we do. In his book, "Nature of the Physical World," Dr. Eddington wrote: "I am standing on the threshold about to enter a room. It is a complicated business. In the first place I must shove against an atmosphere pressing with a force of fourteen pounds on every square inch of my body. I must make sure of landing on a plank traveling at twenty miles a second round the sun. I must do this while hanging from a round planet, head outward into space." Only a few scientists bother to understand what is involved in the process of walking into a room. The rest of us just walk in.

Most of us do not understand the composition of water but we drink it. None of us knows what electricity is but we use it. Who can understand the process of love? Yet many have given their lives in sacrifice because they loved. Though we cannot explain God, most of us say with Christopher Morley: "I had a thousand questions to ask God; but when I met him, they all fled and didn't seem to matter."

To say, "I believe in God" means more than just an intellectual assent to the existence of God. It means to trust in Him and to commit our lives to His will. I know a man who was suffering with severe headaches. He went to the doctor and his case was diagnosed as a tumor on the brain. The man had no way of knowing whether or not the doctor was correct. He had to have faith in him.

Because he had faith in the doctor, the man permitted himself to be put to sleep in a room where none of his family or friends were. He gave his consent for the doctor to open his head and cut on his brain. The slip of the knife one tiny fraction of an inch would mean instant death to the patient, yet he was willing for the operation. His belief in the doctor meant he was willing and ready to trust himself in the doctor's hands.

David Cairns tells about coming home with his father from a fishing trip. His line had become tangled and the little boy was doing his best to get it straightened out again. After watching his efforts a while his father said, "Let me try it, David." In the skillful hands of his father the line began to straighten out like magic and in two or three minutes it was good as ever. Years later David Cairns said that he learned that is how God deals with His children and how we should deal with Him.

Not one of us is wise enough to direct our own lives and most of us get tangled up in some way. But it has been proven again and again that when we decide we really want to do the right thing and, as best as we know how, look to God for guidance and help, the tangled places do, like magic, become straightened out again.

One night there was a terrific storm. The next morning a little girl asked her father, "What was God doing last night during the storm?" Then she answered her own question. "I know, God was making the morning." So it is with the storms of our lives. God is forever making mornings.

So the main question is not whether we believe or whether God is trustworthy. In one of Lloyd Douglas' books, a cynical lady said, "I'm not sure I believe in God." To which a very wise man replied, "It isn't so urgent, at present, whether you believe in God as whether He can believe in you. If you will conduct yourself in a manner that might encourage Him to believe in you, the time may come when you feel you should return the compliment."

II

We trust in God because we realize our own weaknesses and inadequacies. As long as we feel sufficient unto ourselves we do not need God; we are our own gods. No person ever really finds God until there is a felt need in his life that only God can fill. Until you need Him you won't have Him.

We sometimes say it is our duty to go to church, and it is, but very few go for that reason. I would just as soon that no one came to my church just from a sense of duty. The ones who gain the most from the church are those who come from a sense of need. Their minds are open to the truth of God and their hearts are open to the presence of God. The person who comes to church really seeking God will be impressed by the very existence of the church building.

The other day I met with a church building committee which is now supervising the spending of a considerable sum of money on their building. I told them about one man in the church who had contributed fifty dollars toward the building. That man makes less than sixty dollars a week and has a wife and three children to support. This winter he has been wearing a summer suit because he did not have the money to buy a winter suit. Yet he contributed fifty dollars to help build a church. When I walk into a church building I realize that, in most instances, it represents real sacrifice on the part of many.

During the singing of the hymns at church, I see many people who inspire me. They have problems and burdens, but they have something else which enables them to sing. During the time of prayer I am impressed with the fact that so many do really pray. Surely there must be something to it.

The other day a young lady talked to me about a job in the church. I asked what salary she expected and she told me the salary did not matter. She said, "I will live on whatever I get. What I want is an opportunity to serve God." She inspired me as does the memory of those down through the centuries who made such large sacrifices for their faith. As the minister reads from the Bible and talks about it, I realize there must be a reason why the Book outlasts all other books. These and other thoughts inspire my spirit, lift my confidence and make me surer of God.

On the other hand, if one comes to church without a sense of need he is apt to have a cynical spirit. He finds fault with the building, he looks at the people around him and criticizes them, he doubts the sincerity of the minister, he thinks the choir is trying to show off. That person came for nothing and he receives nothing. Better for him to have stayed at home.

We never really believe in God until we feel the need of Him. As Giles Fletcher put it: "He is a path, if any be misled;—He is a robe, if any naked be;—If any chance to hunger, He is bread;—If any be a bondman, He is free;—If any be but weak, how strong is He!—To dead men, life is He;—To sick men, health;—To blind men, sight; To the needy, wealth; A pleasure without loss; a treasure without stealth."

PASTORAL PRAYER from page 2

heard for those who are not able to be here. Thou who dost understand the needs of all Thy people everywhere, through Thy holy spirit wilt Thou bring Thy blessings to all whom we know and love and hold dear. Wilt thou bless those who are away from us. Wilt Thou bless those who are sick. Wilt Thou bless all who are perturbed in mind and spirit. Make strong the bonds of Christian affection.

We pause on this day to thank Thee for the privilege of living in this free land. In our thoughts we honor those who have died that we might live in this freedom. Grant that Thy blessing may be upon all who live the life of loyalty to what they know is highest and best. May our lives be blessed in the memory of those who have made the great sacrifice.

We pray for Thy church all about this world as it carries on its heroic ministry opening up highways of faith and enterprise, bringing light into places of darkness, and healing into places of distress, hope to all men as they come to know Christ as their Master and their Friend and their Lord and their Deliverer. Wilt Thou turn the hearts of all people to Thee with fresh earnestness. Wilt Thou touch the spirits of all men with Thy love that this may be a kindly world. Through Thy grace may the foundations of peace be established and made strong.

And now as we place ourselves in Thy keeping in complete trust and consecration, wilt Thou bless the life of this church. May it be profoundly a life of prayer. May it be very earnestly a life of outreach to help others. May it be a life of inward devotion and outward service, a life of the warm heart and the helping hand. May all that we do be done in Thy spirit, for the sake of Thy kingdom, and to the glory of Thy holy name. This we pray through Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Lord. Amen.

WORTH QUOTING

E. Paul Hovey
The Federated Churches
Lewiston, Idaho

Love is unconditional . . . Love is creative and creativity includes risk . . . Love is the source of grace. Love accepts that which is unacceptable and love renews the old being so that it becomes a new being . . . That which makes one graceful is love. But grace is, at the same time, the love which forgives and accepts . . . Love includes justice to others and to oneself.

Paul Tillich in
Theology of Culture

* * *

It is not so much what we earn today as what we save today that determines our position tomorrow.

Calvin Coolidge

* * *

Your life is fragile; handle it with prayer.

* * *

God gives wisdom as he gives gold; his treasure house is not the mint, but the mine.

What do we live for if not to make the world less difficult for each other.

George Eliot

* * *

In every soul is deposited the germ of a great future.

* * *

Faith never looks to circumstances, but trods onward with its steadfast gaze on Christ.

* * *

The pleasures of sin are 'for a season," but its wages are for eternity.

* * *

Faith is not believing that God can; it is knowing that He will.

* * *

God calls men when they are busy; Satan when they are idle.

* * *

A true Christian will serve, aid, and commiserate with everybody; yea, even his most bitter enemies. Austerity, cruelty, and unmercifulness he hates with all his heart. He has a nature like his Father of whom he is born, for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on

the unjust. If I, then, be of a different nature than he, I show that I am not his child.

Menno Simons

* * *

No amount of enthusiasm for Jesus and for his church is a substitute for the unconditional obedience of faith. When this obedience is withheld, the result is a hollow sentimentalism whose hollowness, unfortunately, is not likely to become evident until the storms come.

James D. Smart in
The Obedience of Faith

* * *

It is in literature that the concrete outlook of humanity receives its expression. Accordingly, it is to literature that we must look, particularly in its more concrete forms, namely in poetry or drama, if we hope to discover the inward thoughts of a generation.

Alfred North Whitehead in
Science and the Modern World

* * *

To be positive means to be mistaken at the top of one's voice.

Ambrose Bierce

* * *

It is with narrow-minded people as with narrow-necked bottles: the less they have in them the more noise they make in pouring it out.

Alexander Pope

* * *

Democracy is based upon the conviction that there are extraordinary possibilities in ordinary people.

Harry Emerson Fosdick

* * *

As a child I had a fiery temper which often caused me to say or do unkind things. Finally my father told me that for each thoughtless, mean thing I did, he would drive a nail into our gatepost; for each kindness, a nail would be withdrawn.

As the nails increased, getting them out became a challenge. At last the wished for day arrived — only one more nail. As my father withdrew it, I danced around proudly exclaiming, "See, Daddy, the nails are all gone!"

"Yes," agreed my father, "the nails are gone—but the scars remain."

Hazel Farris in
Better Homes and Gardens

* * *

Doing is the great thing. For if, resolutely, people do what is right, in time they come to like doing it.

John Ruskin

* * *

The world does not require so much to be informed as to be reminded.

Hannah More

* * *

You are rich if you can see the riches of others and not let them make you unhappy. If you can view their possessions and not let their possessions make you covet them, you are rich—rich in spirit, and that makes for real happiness.

* * *

Principles do not tell us much about how to act in specific situations. Principles tell us more how to feel, how not to act, and what to look out for.

* * *

It is well to remember that in collective, as well as individual, life the force which coerces the body but does not persuade the will can have only negative significance. It can prevent something which we abhor more than conflict, and it can enforce our will and purpose momentarily on a recalcitrant foe. But the loyalties and cohesions of the community are managed and transfigured not by force but by a wise statecraft. Therefore, our military power can not be as potent as we think in making our world hegemony sufferable either to our friends and allies or to ourselves. Britain learned the limits of force in Ireland and then in India. We have not had comparable lessons, which may be the reason we do not have a comparable wisdom.

Reinbold Niebuhr

While time lasts there will always be a future, and that future will hold both good and evil, since the world is made to that mingled pattern.

Dorothy L. Sayers

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We fail to win happiness or peace, because we carry about with us burdens of guilt, shame, hate, envy, and fear. Because we cannot fully identify ourselves with our fellows, or strive for what Adler called "true goals," we live in fear. The witches' broth of fears, hatreds, and greeds forces great nations into evermore devastating wars, and within nations sets class against class. The vast collective neurosis into which Freud saw civilization hurrying will serve very well as a modern version of hell.

William H. Roberts